

# Rockville Villages

Thank you, Mayor and Council for this opportunity.

I'm Norene Stovall, 102 Dale Drive, and a founding member the Rockville Villages Advisory Committee. Many of you, if not all, have seen me behind this and other podiums talking about Rockville Seniors. I'm here on behalf of the Advisory Committee to recommend that the City of Rockville create and fund a Village Facilitator position.

As you may remember, our Chair, Ann Seltz, appeared before the Council on February 28<sup>th</sup> and provided an overview of our Committee and its activities. She included in that presentation our recommendation that the City of Rockville create a Village Facilitator staff position to provide support to the many neighborhoods now working to start neighborhood villages. Many people in support of the Village attended that night.

Tonight we are back – I ask those here in support of Villages to please stand.

At the invitation of a council member, the committee developed a position overview that was delivered with a cover letter as an email early in March.

We're here tonight to stress to the Council the importance of funding this position. For your convenience, I've included a copy of the letter and overview in your packets.

While village development must be organic to each neighborhood, there are many ways a City-based Village Facilitator can help, including:

- Providing a current and expert overview to existing services and programs useful to neighborhood villages,

For more information: [RockvilleVillages@gmail.com](mailto:RockvilleVillages@gmail.com) <https://www.facebook.com/rockvillevillages>  
Rockville page on Montgomery County website: <http://tinyurl.com/rockvillevillages>

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- Helping to educate interested neighborhoods in best practices and realistic timelines
- Connecting interested neighborhoods so that they can help each other
- Facilitating resource-sharing across neighborhoods

As you will note in the position overview, we think that the City Villages Facilitator should have a somewhat different role than that of the county village coordinator. We believe community organizing expertise is important for the Rockville position.

We have recently launched a website ([rockvillevillages.org](http://rockvillevillages.org)) and are currently planning a second outreach event in October. We are also developing some communication materials in English, Chinese, Korean, Farsi, and Spanish. as well as other languages as needed to reflect neighborhood populations.

However providing consistent and professional guidance to individual neighborhoods requires a commitment with regular outreach to all the neighborhoods in Rockville. That is beyond the scope of a volunteer committee. We conservatively estimate that a total of 1200 hours of volunteer time have been donated since the project began in September of 2014.

This estimate does not include Senior Center staff contributions. We have contacted, met with, and hosted villages in Greenbelt, Silver Spring, Hyattsville, and with New Mark Commons, East Rockville, and King Farm here in the City to share ideas. I reached out to Montgomery College's Service Learning program (worth 3 credits to students) and they are willing to assist neighborhood villages.

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Nik Sushka head of that program attended our 10 a.m. today and told us she believes there are opportunities for continuing partnerships with Rockville Villages

A primary goal of our committee has been to develop a village support model for all interested neighborhoods in Rockville, regardless of neighborhood resources. To meet that goal, the Villages Facilitator may need to develop education and outreach programs for neighborhoods that require more guidance and support. The bonus is villages promote neighborhood friendliness and cohesion.

We believe the Village Facilitator position would live best at The Senior Center as that staff has worked closely with this committee from its beginning. (Terry Hilton, Martha McClelland, Alexis D'Angelo and the recently retired Lorraine Schack).

We hope to work with the City of Rockville to secure funding for this position and approval of our recommended hub-and-spoke model. This model is unique to Rockville we believe.

Thank you very much, and we look forward to your continued interest and, I hope financial support. Please excuse me, but I must leave shortly to prepare for an upcoming meeting of my local neighborhood village that is now forming.